Turning Gray.

Life's sands are running fast away;
The buoyant step of youth is gone;
The falling hair is turning gray;
And time seems now to hurry on
More fleetly than in days of yore—
Before the heart became its prey—
Before 'twas saddened to the core—
Before the hair was quite so gray!

Yes, turning gray! Age comes like snow,
As still, and carves each careworn line;
Its wrinkles on the brow will grow;
The hair with silver streaks will shine;
The eyes their brightness lose; the hand
Grow dry and tremulous and thin—
For life, alas! is quickly spanned,
And death its gates soon closes in.

Ah, turning gray! We fain would hide
The sign how long with time we've been—
Those deepened wrinkles, side by side,
Cut by the sorrows we have seen;
So feebler beats the heart as years
More quickly cluster on our head;
And autumn rain-drops hang like tears
On some fair flower that's nearly dead.

Like perished petals from the flower,
Our hopes and wildest joys are laid—
Born only for a day or hour—
Sweet gambols by the fancy played.
As age comes on we long for rest
As saints near shrines will long to pray;
But still we love that time the best
Before the hair is turning gray.

RUTH'S FATHER-IN-LAW.

A curious trade to take, but then it has grown profitable. Things were at a low ebb with me when I took it up, while now—

There, I won't boast, only say that I'm thankful for it. Poverty comes in at the door, and love flies out of the window, so your poor people will be always miserable, while according to my experience your poor man is often more light-hearted than the man with thousands.

I was at my wits' ends for something to do, and sat nibbling my nails one day, grumbling horribly.

"Don't go on like that, Tom," says my wife; "things might be worse."

"How?" I said.

"Why, we might have Luke at home, and he is doing well."

Luke's our boy, you know, and we had got him into a merchant's office, where he seemed likely to stay; but I was in a grumbling fit then, and there was a clickety-click noise going on in the next room that fidgeted me terribly.

"Things can't be worse," I said, angrily; and I was going to prove myself in the wrong by making her cry, when there was a knock at the door.

"Come in," I said, and a fellow lodger put in his head.

"Are you good at work, Mr. Smith?" he said.

"What work?" I said; "firework—gasworks?"

"No, no; I mean works of things as goes with wheels and springs."

"Middling," I said, for I was fond of pulling clocks to pieces and trying to invent.

"I wish you'd come and look at this sewing-machine of mine, for I can't get it to go.

Sewing machines were newish in those days, and I got up to have a look at it, and after about an hour's fiddling about it, I began to see a bit of the reason why—the purpose, you know, of all the screws and cranks and wheels; I found out, too, why our neighbor's wife—who was a dressmaker, and had just started one—could not get it to go; and before night, and by thinking, and putting this and that together, had got her in the way of working it pretty steadily, though, with my clumsy fingers, I couldn't have done it myself.

I had my bit of dinner and tea with these people, and they forced half a crown upon me as well, and I went back feeling like a new man, so refreshing had been that bit of work.

"There," said my wife, "I told you something would come."

"Well, so you did," said I, but the something is rather small."

But the very next day—as we were living in the midst of people who were fast taking to sewing machines—if the folks from the next house didn't want me to look at their's! and then the news spreading, as news will spread, that there was somebody who could cobble and tinker machines without putting people to the expense that makers would, if the jobs didn't come in fast so that I was obliged to get files and drills and a vise—regular set of tools by degrees; and at last I was as busy as a bee from morning to night, whistling over my work as happy as a king.

Of course, every now and then I got a breakage, but I could generally get over that by buying a new wheel or spindle, or what not. Next we got to supplying shuttles, and needles and machine cotton. Soon after I bought a machine of a man who was tired of it. Next week I sold it at a good profit; bought another, and another, and sold them; then got to taking them and money in exchange for new ones; and one way or the other became a regular big dealer as you see.

Hundred? Why, new, second-hand and with those being repaired upstairs by the men, I've got at least 300 on the premises, while if anybody had told me fifteen years ago that I should be doing this I should have laughed at him.

That pretty girl showing and explaining the machine to a customer? That's Ruth, that is. No, not my daughter—yet, but she soon will be. Poor girl, I always think of her and of bread thrown upon the waters at the same time.

Curious idea, that, you will say, but I'll tell you why.

In our trade we have strange people to deal with. Most of 'em are poor, and can't buy a machine right off, but are ready and willing to pay so much a week. That suits them, and it suits me, if they'll only keep the payments up to the end.

You won't believe me, perhaps, but some of them don't do that. Some of them leave their lodgings, and I never see them again; and the most curious part is that the sewing machine disappears with them, and I never see that again. Many a one, too, that has disappeared like that, I do see again—perhaps have it brought here by some one to be repaired or exchanged for a bigger or for one by a different maker; for if you look round here you'll see I've got all kinds—new and old, little domestics and big trades—there, you name any maker, and see if I don't bring out one of his works.

Well, whenever I ask these people where they got the machine—for I always know them by the number—it turns out that they've bought it through an advertisement or at a salesroom, or maybe out of a pawnbroker's shop.

But I've had plenty of honest people to deal with, too—them as have come straightforward and asked me to take their machine back, when I'd allow them as much as I thought fair, and 'twould be an end of a pleasant transaction.

The way I have been bitten, though by some folks had made me that case-hardened that sometimes I've wondered whether I'd got any heart, and the wife had to interfere, telling me I've been spoiled with prosperity and grown unfeeling.

It was she that made me give way about Ruth; for one day, after having had my bristles all set up by finding out that three good sound machines, by best makers, had gone, nobody knew where, who should come into the shop but a ladylike-looking woman in very shabby widow's weeds. She wanted a machine for herself and daughter to learn, and said she had heard I would take the money by installment. Now just half an hour before, by our shop-clock, I had made a vow that I'd give up all that part of the trade, and I was very rough with her—just as I am when I'm cross—and said "No."

"But you will if the lady gives security?" said my wife, hastily.

The poor woman gave such a woe begone look at us that it made me more out of temper than ever, for I could feel that if I stopped I should have to let her have one at her own terms. And so it was; for there, if I didn't let her have a first-class machine, as good as new, she only paying seven and one-half down, and undertaking to pay half a crown a week, and no more security than nothing!

To make it worse, too, if I didn't send the thing home without charge! Luke went with it, for he was back at home now keeping my books, being grown into a fine young fellow of twenty-five and I sat and growled the the whole of the rest of the day, calling myself all the weak-minded idiots under the sun, and telling the wife that business was going to the dogs, and I should be ruined.

Luke came back soon after looking very strange, and I was at him directly.

"Where's the seven an' six?" I says, angrily.

He didn't answer, but put three half-crowns down on the desk, took out his book, made his entries—date of delivery, first payment, when the other's due and all the rest of it—and was then going into the house.

"Mind," I said sharply, those payments are to be kept up to the day; and to-morrow you go down to the Rollys, who live nearly opposite to 'em, and tell 'em to keep an eye on the widow, or we shall lose another machine."

"You need't be afraid, father," he said coldly; they're honest enough, only poor."

I was just in that humor that I wanted to quarrel with somebody, and that did it.

"When I ask you for your opinion, young man, you give it me; and when I tell you to do a thing, you do it," I says, in as savage a way as ever I spoke to the lad. "You go over to-morrow and tell the Rollys to keep a strict lookout on those people; do you hear?

"Father," he says, looking me full in the face, "I couldn't insult them by doing such a thing," when, without another word, he walked quietly out of the shop, leaving me worse than ever.

For that boy had never spoken to me like that before, and I should have gone after him feeling like mad, only some people came in, and I didn't see him again until evening, and a good thing, too, for I'm sure I should have said all sorts of things to the boy that I should have been sorry for after. And there I was, fuming and fretting about, savage with everybody, giving short answers, snapping at the wife, and feeling as a man does feel when he knows that he has been in the wrong and hasn't the heart to go and own it.

It was about 8 o'clock that I was sitting by the parlor fire, with the wife working and very quiet, when Luke came in from the workshop with a book under his arm, for he had been trotting up the men's piece-work, and what was due to them, and the sight of him made me feel as if I wanted to quarrel.

He saw it, too, but he said nothing, only put the accounts away and began to read.

The wife saw the storm brewing, and she knew how put out I was, for I had not lit my pipe, nor yet had my evening nap, which I always had after tea. She did what she so well knew how to do—filled my pipe, forced it in my hand, and just as I was going to dash it to pieces in the ashes she gave me one of her old looks, kissed me on the forehead, as with one hand she pressed me back into the chair and then with the other she lit a splint and held it to my tobacco.

I was done. She always gets over me like that; and after smoking in silence for half an hour. I was lying back, with my eyes closed, dropping off to sleep, when the wife said (what had gone before I hadn't heard):

"Yes, he's asleep now."

That woke me up of course, and if I didn't lie there shamming and heard all they said in a whisper!

"How came you to make him more vexed than he was, Luke?" said the wife; and he told her.

"I couldn't do it, mother," he said excitedly. "It was heart-breaking. She's living in a wretched room there with her daughter; and, mother, when I saw her I felt as if—there, I can't tell you."

"Go on, Luke," she said.

"They're half-starved," he said, in a Susky way. "Oh, mother! it's horrible. Such a sweet, beautiful girl, and the poor woman herself dying almost with some terrible disease."

The wife sighed.

"They told me," he went on, "how hard they had tried to live by ordinary needlework, and failed, and that as a last resource they had tried to get the machine.

"Poor things! said the wife; "but are you sure the mother was a lady?"

"A clergyman's widow," says Luke, hastily; "there isn't a doubt about it. Poor girl! and they've got to learn to use it before it will be of any use."

"Poor girl, Luke," said the wife softly; and I saw through my eyelashes that she laid a hand upon his arm, and was looking curiously at him, when if he didn't cover his face with his hands, rest his elbows on the tavle, and give a low groan! Then the old woman got up, stood behind his chair, and began playing with and caressing his hair like the foolish old mother would.

"Mother," he said, suddenly, "will you go and see them?"

She didn't answer for a minute, only stood looking at him, and then said softly

"They paid you the first money?"

"No," he said hotly, "I hadn't the heart to take it."

"Then that money you paid was yours, Luke?"

"Yes, mother," he says, simply; and those two stopped looking at the other, till the wife bent down and kissed him, holding his head afterward for a few moments between her hands; for she always did worship that chap, our only one; and then I closed my eyes tight, and went on breathing heavy and thinking.

For something like a new revelation had come upon me. I knew that Luke was 25, and that I was 54, but he always seemed like a boy to me, and here I was waking up to the fact that he was a grown man, and that he was thinking and feeling as I first thought and felt when I saw his mother, nigh upon eight-and-twenty years ago.

I lay back, thinking and telling myself I was very savage with him for deceiving me, and that I wouldn't have him and his mother plotting against me, and that I wouldn't stand by and see him make a fool of himself with the first pretty girl he set eyes on, when he might marry Maria Turner, the engineer's daughter and have a nice bit of money with her to put into the business, and then be my partner.

"No," I says, "if you plot together I'll plot alone," and then I pretended to wake up, took no notice, and had my supper.

I kept rather gruff next morning, and made myself very busy about the place, and I dare say I spoke more sharply than usual, but the wife and Luke were as quiet as could be; and about twelve o'clock I went out, with a little oil-can and two or three tools in my pocket.

It was not far to Bennett's place, and on getting to the right house I asked for Mrs. Murray, and was directed to the second floor, where, as I reached the door, I could hear the clicking of my sewing machine, and whoever was there was so busy over it that she did not hear me knock; so I opened the door softly and looked in upon as sad a scene as I shall ever, I dare say, see.

There, in the bare room, sat, asleep in her chair, the widow lady who came about the machine, and I could see that in her face which told plainly enough that the pain and suffering she must have been going through for years would soon be over; and, situated as she was, it gave me a kind of turn.

"It's no business of yours," I said to myself roughly; and I turned to look who it was that was bending over my machine.

I could see no face, only a slight figure in rusty black; and a pair of busy white hands were trying very hard to govern the thing, and to learn to use it well.

"So that's the gal, is it?" I said to myself. "Ah! Luke my boy, you've got to the silly calf age, and I dare say—"

I got no further, for at that moment the girl started and turned around, and turned upon me a timid, wondering face that made my heart give a queer throb, and I couldn't take my eyes off her.

"Hush!" she said, softly, holding up her hand; and I saw it was as thin and transparent as if she had been ill.

"My name's Smith," I said, taking out a screw-driver. "My machine; how does it go? Thought I'd come and see."

Her face lit up in a moment, and she came forward eagerly.

"I'm so glad you've come," she said. "I can't quite manage this."

She pointed to the thread-regulator, and the next minute I was showing her that it was too tight, and somehow, in a gentle, timid way, the little witch quite got over me, and I stopped there two hours helping her, till her eyes sparkled with delight, as she found out easily she could now make the needle go in and out of hard material.

"Do you think you can do it now?" I said.

"Oh, yes, I think so; I am so glad you came."

"So am I," says I, gruffly; "it will make it all the easier for you to earn the money and pay for it."

"And I will work so hard," she said, earnestly.

"That you will, my dear," I says in spite of myself, for I felt sure it wasn't me speaking, but something in me. "She been ill long?" I said, nodding toward her mother.

"Months," she said, with tears starting in her pretty eyes; "but," she added, brightly, "I shall have enough with this to get her goods, to get her good medicines and things she can fancy;" and as I looked at her, something in me said:

"God bless you, my dear! I hope you will;" and the next minute I was going down stairs, calling myself a fool.

They thought I didn't know at home, but I did; there was the wife going over and over again to the Bennett's place; and all sorts of little nice things were made and taken there. I often used to see them talking about it, but I took no notice; and that artful scoundrel, my boy Luke, used to pay the half crown every week out of his own pocket, after going to fetch it from the widow's.

And all the time I told myself I didn't like it, for I could see that Luke was changed, and always thinking of that girl—a girl not half good enough for him. I remembered poor myself, and I hated poverty, and I used to speak harshly to Luke and the wife, and feel very bitter.

At last there came an afternoon when I knew there was something wrong. The wife had gone out directly after dinner, saying she was going to see a sick woman—I knew who it was, bless you!—and Luke was fidgeting about, not himself, and at last he took his hat and went out.

"They might have confided in me," I said bitterly, but all the time I knew that I wouldn't let them. "They'll be spending money—throwing it away. I know they've spent pounds on them already."

At last I got in such a way that I called down our foreman, left him in charge, and took my hat and went after them.

Everything was very quiet in Bennett's place, for a couple of dirty, dejected-looking women, one who was in arrears to me, had sent the children that played in the court right away because of the noise, and was keeping guard so that they should not come back.

I went up-stairs softly, and all was very quiet, only as I got nearer to the room I heard a bitter, wailing cry, and then I opened the door and went in.

Luke was there, standing with his head bent by the sewing-machine; the wife sat in a chair, and on her knees, with her face buried in the wife's lap, was the poor girl, crying as if her little heart would break; while on the bed, with all look of pain gone out of her face, lay the widow—gone to meet her husband where pain and sorrow are no more.

I couldn't see very plainly, for there was a mist like before my eyes; but I know Luke flushed up as he took a step forward, as if to protect the girl, and the wife looked at me in a frightened way.

But there was no need, for something that wasn't me spoke, and that in a gentle way, as I stepped forward, raised the girl up, and kissed her pretty face before laying her little helpless head upon my shoulder and smoothing her soft brown hair.

"Mother," says that something from within me, "I think there's room in the nest at home for this poor, forsaken little bird. Luke, my boy, will you go and fetch a cab? Mother will see to what wants doing here."

My boy gave a sob as he caught my hand in his, and the next moment he did what he had not done for years—kissed me on the cheek—before running out of the room, leaving me with my darling nestling in my breast.

I said "my darling," for she has been the sunshine of our home ever since—a pale, wintry sunshine while the sorrow was fresh, but spring and summer now. Why, bless her! look at her. I've felt ashamed sometimes to think that she, a lady of birth, should come down to such a life; making me—well, no, it's us now, for Luke's partner—no end of money by her clever ways. But she's happy, thinking her husband, that is to be, the finest fellow under the sun; and let me tell you there's many a gentleman not so well off as my boy will be, even if the money has all come out of a queer trade.

A Learned Poodle.

Once an expert in Paris, finding it was impossible to convince people that he was right and the public were wrong, taught a poodle to determine what was a true antique coin, and what was bogus. A dealer would bring coins for sale. Their false character would be stated at once, but when the sellers were disputative the expert would say, "My poodle can tell you without the least trouble which coin or coins are false." The poodle would be introduced. The money would be placed on the table, the good with the bad, and after nosing them for an instant, the dog would knock off the table with his paw all the bad pieces. Of course this trait of canine sagacity was convincing. The man's knowledge was but secondary with that of the dog, and the party with the false coins would go away perfectly satisfied. The fame of the dog extended over many countries. There was even the possibility that the poodle would be elected an honorary member of several learned societies. People would come with coins, asking for the expert, and when he was absent would say: "Well, if the master is out, pray let the dog look at them. We will be quite satisfied with his judgment." The trick was quite simple. The numismatist took care to handle the bad coins and not to touch the authentic pieces. The dog's fine sense of smell at once distinguished the pieces his master's fingers touched, and he unhesitatingly separated the bad coins from the good ones.

THE HUASCAR'S BRAVE MEN.

The Most Desperate Naval Battle ever Fought—Admiral Grau's Terrible Death—Terrible Scenes on the Huascar's Deck.

A letter from Antofagasta, Chili, says: The outlines of the great naval battle off the Bay of Mejillones have, of course, long before this reached the outside world, but the details of this most dramatic of modern contests on the sea are yet to be told. The Huascar was almost the sole hope of the Peruvian government in her war with Chili on the water. She was admirably adapted to intercept and capture Chilian merchantmen and transports, and thus strike an effective blow at Chilian commerce, and it was for precisely this purpose that she was used by the Peruvians. The record of her deeds in this line was a long one. On the very spot where she was captured she had sunk in one day alone fourteen Chilian vessels, laden with coal; she had alone bombarded Antofagasta and silenced its batteries; in a single day she had captured and burned three Chilian brigs; and, in fact, she had become such an annoyance, not to say terror, to the Chilian government that it was determined to capture her at all hazards. It was known that the Huascar and the Union had sailed from Iquique to continue their depredations on Chilian commerce, and a fleet of eight vessels was sent out to intercept and capture them. The Huascar was a monitor of 1,250 tons measurement and carried two Armstrong 300-pounders in her turret and two 40-pounders on deck. In the terrible combat through which she passed, however, these latter were of little use on account of the height of the Chilian vessels. She was manned by 170 men and commanded by the pride of the Peruvian navy, Rear-Admiral Don Miguel Grau.

Four of the Chilian fleet were discovered by Admiral Grau, about 3:30 A. M., to the south of him, and in close pursuit. To have attempted to give battle to this superior force would have been simply criminal recklessness, and so, trusting to the speed of his two vessels, Admiral Grau attempted to escape by going northward. The Union is a remarkably fast vessel, and rapidly increased the gap between herself and her enemies. The Huascar was not so fast, but she, too, was making good headway, and in a fair way of escaping, when suddenly, just after passing this port, at about 8:30 in the morning, when off the little strip of Bolivian territory which lies between Chili and Peru, she found herself confronted by the Chilian iron-clad frigate Cochrane, the corvette O'Higgins, and the transport Loa. They were to the northwest, and bearing steadily and rapidly down upon her. Meantime, the iron-clad Blanco Encalada had left the three wooden ships of the first division of the Chilian fleet to pursue the Union, and had made her course direct for the Huascar. Admiral Grau found himself thus with a formidable foe, both in front and rear. He knew that to engage with them meant utter defeat, and he kept on in his northerly course, hugging the coast closely. The Union, meantime, left the Huascar to her fate, scudded rapidly up the coast, and escaped to Arica, the O'Higgins and the Loa, which had been dispatched in pursuit, proving too slow to overtake her.

When off the bay of Mexillones, Admiral Grau saw that escape was impossible, and that he must either fight on a forlorn hope, or surrender without striking a blow in defense. This latter alternative it was impossible for a man of his bravery and patriotism to consider for a moment, and the Huascar was put in readiness for action. What took place on board after the determination to fight was arrived at, is only known from the statements of the survivors. At 9:15 the doomed monitor found herself between the two iron clads, and a gun from her turret was at once her defiance to the enemy and the signal for the battle to begin. At the same time the Huascar attempted to use her ram on the Cochrane, which was the nearest of the Chilian vessels, but by a skillful maneuvre the Cochrane was turned, and the ram failed to strike her. Both the Chilian vessels are so constructed that they can turn suddenly, by means of their double screws, and this fact gave them a great advantage in the battle. The Huascar found it impossible to use her ram at all, owing to this facility of her enemy for turning short. The Cochrane answered the fire of the Huascar with a broadside from her three hundred-pounders, which did terrible damage to the monitor. The Blanco Encalada was not yet within cannon-shot, and for an hour the contest was waged between the Cochrane and the Huascar alone. During that time the Chilian fired thirty shots and the Peruvian twenty-five. The latter was fairly battered to pieces, but still her flag flew, and, though her decks were strewn with the dead bodies and mangled limbs of her brave crew, there were no signs of any disposition to lower it. It began to look, as an officer of the Cochrane said, as though every man on board was determined to die at his post. Admiral Grau, at the beginning of the unequal battle, had taken his position in the watch-tower of the commander, which is just aft of the gun-turret. This watch-tower is so constructed that while it is intended to protect the commander, it is really the most dangerous place on board. It is hexagonal in shape, and is formed of plates of iron three inches thick on the outside. Within is a casing of teak wood eight inches in thickness, and still within this a half inch layer of iron. The third shot struck this tower, crashed through the outer iron, and shattered the wood to fragments. Admiral Grau was at once killed. The splinters from the wood after such a concussion would have been enough to have killed him. The only portion of the brave man's body that was found after the surrender of the monitor was one foot and a small part of the leg. These were identified by the boot. The admiral was literally blown to fragments. Soon after the wreck of the tower, Senor Aguirre, who had taken command, was struck on the head by one of the three-pound shot, the whole top being carried away, leaving only a part of the lower jaw, with the beard hanging to it. His right arm and side, when found, were completely crushed in, and in his right leg were four gaping wounds, supposed to have been made by an exploding shell.

It was about an hour after the action began when the Blanco Encalada reached the scene and opened her batteries upon the Huascar, which was now a mere floating coffin. It was thirty-five minutes more, however, before the flag was hauled down and the shower ceased to fall on the monitor. She was then boarded by an officer of the Blanco Encalada, and the prisoners and wounded were taken off. The scene presented was a frightful one. The cabin had been literally shot away, and dead bodies and severed limbs were strewn on every side. The Huascar, above the water-line, was fairly battered to pieces. The engines were not materially injured, as they were below the water-line, but nearly everything else on board was wrenched and twisted and torn to pieces. Of the capstan, only a small piece was left. The small cannon on the port side was cut in two by a ball, while that on the left had been hit and disabled. That portion of the bow containing the figure-head was carried away, and five shots had passed completely through her armor. On the cross-trees of the mainmast, which was of iron, a nest was constructed, and in this four men with a mitrailleuse were stationed. The men were shot away by one of the first balls, and the mast itself is pierced with several holes. It is a matter of real wonder how a vessel so thoroughly dismantled could have floated so long as she did. The Chilian flag was soon hoisted where the Peruvian colors had floated so proudly and so long, and the monitor was brought to this port. Eighty-three prisoners were taken, and twenty-seven dead bodies were found, which were buried by the Chilians with naval honors. Sixty of the persons on board are still unaccounted for. They were either blown overboard and drowned, or, like Admiral Grau, utterly annihilated. Lieut. Enrique Palacios, the last who took command in the action, after all his superior officers had fallen, was paroled by the captain of the Cochrane, on condition that on his arrival in Lima an exchange should be effected for one of the captured officers of the Esmeralda, but before he could leave this port he died of his many wounds received in the fight. The burial of the dead was under the supervision of the Chilian government, and as much honor was done to the brave men as though they had been friends instead of foes. The funeral rites were attended by the minister of war, the commander-in-chief, the chief staff, and many other officers and citizens, who formed a long and solemn procession to the spot selected for the burial. The Huascar will be thoroughly repaired and added to the Chilian navy, retaining her old name.

Gen. Sickles' Daughter.

The elopement of Miss Carrie Sickles, daughter of Gen. Daniel E. Sickles, from Paris, with a Southerner named McCarthy, has been given the public by cable dispatches. Gen. Sickles pursued the pair to London, where he had them arrested. The young lady is about twenty-five years of age, and is very accomplished. She has a superb figure and charming manners.

The writer of this, while in Baltimore several years ago, was told a story about Miss Sickles by a school friend of hers, which is full of pathetic interest just now. A little party had been given at the house of a lady in Baltimore, where the writer met Miss Sickles, and was struck by her quick-witted repartees and her readiness to chat about current topics of interest. Meeting a schoolmate of hers next day, the writer alluded to this. "Oh, yes," was the reply; "she was gay enough then, poor child, but I think she is almost broken-hearted notwithstanding her vivacity." A few questions brought out the whole sad story. Gen. Sickles' first wife, the mother of his daughter, as will be remembered, was connected in the famous scandal with Philip Barton Key, the district attorney at Washington, D. C. Sickles shot Key in 1859, and killed him, was tried for his murder and was acquitted. His wife died shortly after and before her daughter was old enough to understand the disgrace of it all. Gen. Sickles, with jealous watchfulness, kept the facts connected with her mother's share in the tragedy a secret from his daughter, and she knew nothing about it until she was nearly nineteen. She was a sensitive, loving girl, and worshipped the memory of the mother whom she had been taught to love, and she frequently spoke of her to her friends. Miss Sickles went to a school in Baltimore, and one day while reciting in a class she had a slight quarrel with a girl from Washington. After school a number of girls were seated together, among them being Miss Sickles and the girl with whom she had quarreled. Miss Sickles apologized for what she had said, but the other girl refused to be comforted, and finally grew very angry and began to taunt Miss Sickles about the terrible story of her mother's wrong-doing. Miss Sickles demanded an explanation, which was given, and the poor young lady almost lost her reason in the attack of illness which followed.

She left the school when she recovered her health, and soon afterward joined her father. It was said she acted very wildly toward him for keeping the story hidden from her, and reproached him bitterly. The effect of the revelation was that Miss Sickles' manner and actions changed from what they had been before, and she began to worry her father by her apparent heartlessness and fondness for the excitement connected with the life of a belle in an American city like Washington.

The son of Philip Barton Key (whose father wrote the "Star Spangled Banner") is now an actor, and as "James Barton," he took part in the performances of the "Pullman Palace Car Tourists," who were the first company to appear at the Opera house in this city this winter.—*Pittsburgh Telegraph.*

Archimedes Patton and His Impact Cushion.

A rustic genius was Chimedes Patton, who stood six feet one inch without his hat on. In person tall and spare, cadaverous, lanky; and in his way extremely queer and cranky.

He had the name of being 'cute and clever, and prated learnedly of screw and lever. He gave it out that, when he took a notion, he'd fix the matter of perpetual motion.

He'd made a sort of thing to polish shoes; a flute that he could play on with his nose; a coffee pot that blew a blast of warning, when ready for the table in the morning.

The latest idea that he took to pushin', was something that he called an "impact cushion." 'Twas partly springs and partly an inflator, designed to catch the falling elevator.

None knew precisely Mr. Patton's plan, as he at present is a missing man. But what is known of Mr. Patton's fate this mournful verse will mournfully relate.

It seems that Patton first made an inflator; then in his barn set up an elevator. He then combined the two and with a hoist sent it aloft and propped it with a joist.

He rigged a tackle to this upright and climbed up and in—the rope's end in his hand. With confidence he jerked away the prop, and then, of course, things straightway took a drop.

They dropped, they stopped, then pausing, as to breathe, Patton's invention gave a sudden heave; the elevator, with a mighty bound, spurned in a scornful way the humble ground.

Up! Up! it shot; nor stopped it at the roof, but crashing through, was shortly far aloof, and frightened Patton, bulging at the eyes, saw himself rushing toward the distant skies.

This much was seen, but soon his rapid flight took the rash man beyond the range of sight. The gathering twilight drew night's sable pall, one thought a meteor flashed—and this was all.

Save that, days after, through his sweeping glass a planet searcher saw a bright ray pass; he looked again—'twas new! and on the morn; the world was told—"another star is born!"—*New York Hotel Gazette.*

A Missouri doctor paid a patient 402 visits, and squared the bill for a barrel of cider and a load of bricks.

A Coffee Field in Brazil.

From a very full account of the Brazilian coffee industry in *Scribner*, we take this description of the field-work, written from personal observation by Herbert H. Smith:

In southern Brazil, a coffee-field seldom lasts more than thirty years. The plantations are made on the fertile hillsides, where the forest has been growing thick and strong. But the soil here is never deep—six or eight inches of mold at the utmost. In the tropics there are no long winters with mats of dead vegetable matter rotting under the snow. The leaves fall singly, and dry up till they break into dust; logs and decaying branches in the shady woods are carried away by white ants and beetles; hence the mold bed increases very slowly; in twenty-five or thirty years, the strong-growing coffee-trees eat it all up. Most planters simply cut down the forest and leave the trees to dry in the sun for six or eight weeks, when they are burned. S——, more provident, lets the logs rot where they lie, which they do in a year or two; in the open sunlight they are saved from insects, and the ground receives a large accession to its strength.

Back of the house there are two yards or small fields, four acres, perhaps, together. The ground is covered with earthen pots set close together, only leaving little pathways at intervals. Each of the two hundred thousand pots contains a thriving young coffee-plant. The ground forms a gentle slope, and water is constantly running over it, so that it is always soaked. The pots, through orifices at the bottoms, draw up enough of this water to keep the roots moistened. The young plants are protected from the sun by mat screens stretched on poles above the ground.

This is a costly system. Most of the planters take shoots at random from the old fields and set them at once into unprepared ground. Sr. S——'s experiment has cost him probably $20,000; the pots alone cost $11,000. But he will make at least $50,000 by the operation. In the first place, he gains a good year in the start that he gives to these young plants. Then they are not put back in the transplanting; the pots are simply inverted and the roots come out with the earth. They are set into mold or compost which has been prepared in deep holes. The tender rootlets catch hold of this at once, and in a day or two the plant is growing as well as ever.

The nurslings come from select seeds of half a dozen varieties. Sr. S—— has them planted at first in small pots. A dozen slaves are engaged transplanting the six-inch high shoots to larger pots. Little tired-looking children carry them about on their shoulders, working on as steadily as the old ones, for they are well trained. Sr. S—— wants to make his plants last fifty years, so he is careful and tender with them. The little blacks will be free in 1892, so his policy is to get as much work as possible from them while he can.

The plants are set in rows, about ten feet apart. They grow, and thrive, and are happy, out on the hillside. Warm sunshine caresses the leaves; generous rains feed the tender roots; the ground is kept free from intruding weeds and bushes, and the planter waits for his harvest. After four years the trees are six feet high and begin to bear. By the sixth year the crops are very large—three or even four pounds per tree at times. Meanwhile corn and mandioca are planted between the rows. Often in a new plantation the expenses are nearly covered by these subsidiary crops.

In this month of November only a few of the slaves are in the new fields. November is the principal gathering month, and almost the whole force must be at work in the bearing orchards. From sunrise to sunset, men, women and children are gathering the berries in baskets, working silently and steadily under the overseer's eye. Each day, each slave gathers on the average berries enough to produce fifty pounds of dried coffee. The pickings are collected in carts and brought to the mill-house, where the seeds must be prepared for the market.

A Performing Samson.

If report speaks truly, all the astounding feats performed by the strong men of antiquity, including Hercules, Samson, and Milo of Crotona, have been capped by the recent performances of a French athlete, Joignerey by name, at present fulfilling to crowded houses an engagement in the Berlin vaudeville theater. Tossing about the huge cannon balls with sportive grace, this person appears nightly on a raised platform in the body of the theater, above which platform is suspended an ordinary trapeze. His ankles are then fastened to the trapeze, so that he swings head downward a few feet above the surface of the central stage and in full view of every one in the house. A horse covered with gay trappings, and begirt with a broad leathern surcingle, to which two strong loops are attached is then conveyed to the stage, and there mounted by a full grown man. When all these preliminaries have been effected, Joignerey seizes the loops in both hands, and by sheer muscular strength, lifts the "Horse and Rider" some inches off the stage, sustaining their combined weight in the air for several seconds, and letting them down again as slowly and evenly as he had raised them. Upon the occasion of his first performance, the horse selected for experiment was so panic-stricken by being lifted off its feet that, when it was lowered to the level of the platform, its knees gave way under it, and the attendants had a great deal of trouble to make it stand up again. All Berlin is flocking to M. Joignerey's entertainment, which would appear to be the chief attraction of the German capital just now; for, while the managers of the leading theaters are complaining of empty houses the Vaudeville is compelled, night after night, to turn hundreds of curious Berliners away from its doors.—*London Telegraph.*

The Woodpecker in Song.

I smile as I note that the woodpecker proves a refractory bird to Lowell, as well as to Emerson:

> Emerson rhymes it with bear,
> Lowell rhymes it with hear,
> One makes it woodpeckair,
> The other, woodpeckear.

But its hammer is a musical one, and the poets do well to note it. An Illinois poet, I observe, ascribes the "rat-tat-tat" of the downy or hairy woodpecker, heard so often in early spring upon the resinous limbs, and again in the Indian summer, to the yellow-hammer, or high hole. The high-hole is almost entirely a ground pecker, and his beak is seldom heard upon limb or tree, except when he is excavating a nest. Our most musical drummer upon dry limbs among the woodpeckers is the yellow-bellied. His measured, deliberate tap, heard in the stillness of the primitive woods, has an effect that no bird-song possesses.—*John Burroughs, in Scribner.*

Horse cars in Philadelphia are now comfortably warmed. Each car is provided with two small portable furnaces, arranged on either side beneath the body of the car and between the two wheels. By means of flues the heat is directed beneath the cane-covered seats, from which it becomes diffused throughout the car. The smoke is conducted to the front platform, and thence, by means of pipes, to the roof of the car. The consumption of fuel is small, a shovel of coal, and a few sticks of wood sufficing for the entire trip.

A Shadow.

What lack the valleys and the mountains
That once were green and gay?
What lack the babbling fountains?
Their voice is sad to-day.
Only the sound of a voice
Tender and sweet and low,
A year ago!

What lack the tender flowers?
A shadow is on the sun.
What lack the merry hours,
That I long that they were done?
Only two smiling eyes
That told of joy and mirth;
They are shining in the skies;
I mourn on earth.

What lacks my heart that makes it
So weary and full of pain,
That trembling hope forsakes it,
Never to come again?
Only another heart,
Tender and all my own;
In the still grave it lies—
I weep alone.

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

France has spent $900,000,000 since the German war in re-arming.

The Montreal *Witness* says the Canadian government is steadily advancing toward independence.

The American $20 gold piece is superseding the English sovereign as the current gold coin of the world, says a news dispatch.

Senator Bayard is an athlete, and has a reputation both as a pedestrian and boxer. He is broad-shouldered, gray-haired and clean-shaved.

Master Tom: "Stand in the corner? What for?" His Mamma: "Because you are a bad boy." Master Tom: "Can't I be a bad boy here just as well?"

When Artemus Ward was exhibiting his show in Salt Lake City, his complimentary tickets to the city officers, read as follows: "Admit bearer and one wife."

In France locomotives are used on canal tow-paths in place of mules. They make much better time than the mules; but, unlike the mule, there is always the danger that the locomotive may explode.

The price of leather belting has advanced from fifteen to twenty per cent.; but what does the small boy care? He knows very well that though belting does come high, he is bound to have it.—*Chicago Times.*

A drunkard handed a bottle of whiskey to his son for safe-keeping, at Stanford, Ky. The boy dropped and broke it, spilling the liquor. The loss so enraged the man that he shot and killed the boy offender.

Nature seems to exist for the excellent. The world is upheld by the veracity of good men; they make the earth wholesome. Life is sweet and tolerable in our belief in such society; and actually or ideally, we manage to live without superiors.

ALL THE LETTERS.

The following verse contains every letter in the alphabet:

> Except with zeal we strive to win
> God's just and holy love,
> We cannot conquer strife and sin
> Nor walk with Him above.

Waggs went to the station of one of our railroads the other evening, and finding the seats all occupied, said, in a loud tone, "Why, this car isn't going!" Of course these words caused a general stampede, and Waggs took the best seat. The train soon moved off. In the midst of the indignation the wag was questioned, "You said this car wasn't going?" "Well, it wasn't then," replied Waggs, "but it is now."—*Louisville Commercial.*

Ex-Minister Washburne's latest public appearance was as a defender of mule meat. During the days of the commune, he said, "for months there was no meat in Paris but horse meat and mule meat. I never ate horse, but I confess to have partaken freely of the mule, and I will say to the credit of that much-abused animal, that I found him quite good. My secretary assured me that of the many animals he had assisted to devour during the siege, the elephant was the best of all. The stories of people eating cats, rats and dogs and other animals in Paris are literally true."

Forests and Climate.

In an interesting pamphlet by S. V. Dorrien on "The Protection of Forests," the author points out these beneficial effects of forests upon climate: 1. Forests increase the amount of moisture in a region by promoting the formation of clouds and causing more frequent precipitations, at the same time retarding evaporation. 2. They reduce the extreme heat of summer and the extreme cold of winter. 3. They prevent, in steep mountain sites, the fertile soil from sliding down, and protect against avalanches and landslips. 4. They are, especially on the coast of the sea or in mountainous regions, an indispensable barrier against drying winds and sand-drifts. Strange as it may seem, adds Mr. Dorrien, that a protection against a drying wind should be needed on the coast, it is, nevertheless, in the main, correct. During the season when vegetation is in active progress, and drying winds are apt to do the greatest harm, the sea has generally a lower temperature than the land; hence the sea breezes are cool in comparison with the atmosphere over the land. The warmer the air grows, the greater will be its capacity of receiving vapor without being saturated and followed by the formation of clouds or the precipitation of moisture. In other words, the relative moisture of the air decreases as its temperature grows higher. Consequently the air carried in by the sea breezes becoming warmer by being brought into contact with the land, absorbs a portion of its moisture, and thus has a drying effect. Experience shows that this effect extends over many miles from the coast, unless forests or mountains serve as a cover.

How Far Can We Hear with the Telephone?

This is a question frequently asked, but we believe has not yet been definitely settled. The longest distance that we have mentioned is given in the item below, namely, two thousand miles. But perhaps Mr. Edison has had more extended experiences. If so we should be glad if he would let our readers know.

An exchange states that Mr. Robert A. Packer, superintendent of the Pennsylvania railroad, is at present hunting with a party of gentlemen in Nebraska. A few days ago he for two hours conversed pleasantly with his wife and friends at Sayre, Pa., his brother at Mauch Chunk, Pa., and his friends along the line. The medium was the railroad and Western Union telegraph wires and Edison's telephone. At the office in Bethlehem, Pa., connection was made with the Easton and Amboy wire, and at Perth Amboy with a Western Union wire, and thence to Chicago and North Bend, Nebraska, where the party are. The distance was about two thousand miles, and every whisper was audible.—*Scientific American.*

A GILDED GAMBLING PALACE.

Scenes in the Famous Saloons of Monte Carlo—Description of the Play—Piles of Gold and Bank Notes—"The Green Table is a Great Leveler."

To come to Nice without visiting Monaco, writes a correspondent, is to go to London and not see the Tower. Carnivalistic festivities being at an end, I made a trip to Monte Carlo at Monaco, the most famous gambling place the world knows—and the only one in Europe now existing openly under State patronage; for that of Nalais-Saxon, Switzerland, was shut a short time ago, the federal government commission solemnly reading at midnight the law announcing the closing of the last gambling place but one in the old world. Our 12:35 P. M. train leaving Nice was packed with English, Germans, Russians, with here and there an American, some of whom had come from Cannes. Our common destination was Monaco, a half hour's ride through the finest scenery on God's earth.

I descended from the train at Monaco, while my fellow travelers remained a couple of minutes longer, riding to the door of Monte Carlo; for your convenience is so studied that you are kindly left at the very gate of destruction. Preferring to see the town itself first, I climbed the steep rock, perhaps 300 feet high, on which Monaco is perched. The broad, white silk banner of the smallest country in Europe fluttered gaily on the breeze, and the little town lay bathed in sunshine and literally covered with bright flowers, palm trees, cactuses and aloes. I have traveled far and wide, but I never have seen as lovely view of mountains, water and sky as on the threshold of Italy. After visiting the remarkable castle and still more remarkable court, and gazing down from the lovely palace garden into the sea, which lies far below, I started off for Monte Carlo, twenty minutes' walk from the castle, on a road planted with palm trees and innumerable cactuses. This road by the sea wound around the tiny town and afforded unrevealed views stretching around a semi-circle of blue mountains to Italy, and closed by the dim outlines of the city of Bordighiera. It would take me hours to describe one of the finest gardens of Europe, so I'll only say that the garden of Monte Carlo commands the loveliest view and has the finest plants and flowers of the tropics. The promenaders have not the beautiful, peaceful look the landscape has; the ladies, many of them splendidly attired, laugh and talk nervously; the men are wrapt up in their own thoughts, paying little attention to their fair companions. The women care but little for this want of politeness, for this gambling passion is the strongest of all, swallowing up all others, natural and artificial. At the gambling table there is no sex; a man gazes as stolidly at the most beautiful women of Europe as at the walls.

There are some formalities to be gone through before entering the play rooms. A man is not permitted to ruin himself without complying with them. Every journal in the department publishes each day the following notice:

"In accordance with the rules of the Strangers' Circle of Monte Carlo, entrance to the playing rooms is allowed only to persons with tickets. The entrance is forbidden to inhabitants of the principality, and to those of the department, with the exception of club members. Entrance tickets given at the Casino bureau."

A Russian acquaintance of mine, who goes often merely to look on and play a napoleon or so, was refused admittance lately by the secretary, who saw by his card that he had moved from his hotel to private lodgings, and thereby lost his migratory character and became an inhabitant of the department. "Oh, very well," returned the subject of the czar, nonchalantly, "then I shall save a thousand franc bill." He was immediately allowed to enter; circumstances alter cases. The fact is, he had only twenty francs in his pocket, with which he won 600; but he spent it in a day or two, money gained in that way notoriously burning one's pocket. The wisdom of the above measure is obvious. If the inhabitants of the neighborhood were allowed to play, the ruin and desolation would cause the immediate closing of the Casino; whereas when a stranger loses, the next train takes him away, and if he chooses to blow out his brains, it is purely a personal affair.

The Casino is a fine large palace containing a large, elegant ball-room, a theater with a fine orchestra and a splendid reading-room, well supplied with journals in all languages. After entering our name in a visitor's book, we receive an entrance ticket and are permitted to pass into the magnificent gaming-rooms. As we enter at 6 P. M. the rooms are softly lighted to harmonize with the richly decorated walls. There are two tables in the first room and three in the second, at which are played the two games, roulette and rouge et noir. Several hundred players and spectators are present. Silver stakes are predominant on the tables devoted to the first game, but only gold and bank notes on the rouge et noir tables, which are given up to the aristocracy of gamblers, of whom women are in the majority. Not a seat at the tables is unoccupied. Behind the seated gamesters stands an eager crowd of players, as well as spectators, who prick with a pin the progress of the game, preparatory to risking later their money. Well-bred servants, in fine liveries, stand here and there or glide noiselessly around. Four men, cool and unconcerned, at each table, seated on elevated chairs, represent the bank, with piles of gold and bank notes before them. What beautiful women one sees here, and what toilettes. But no one cares to regard either. Here beautiful blue English eyes seem sinister and glassy; little cherry mouths look hard, and pearly teeth are firmly set; little white hands are convulsively clenched; bright faces are ruined by an expression of cupidity; cheeks are flushed, and attitudes denote suppressed excitement. Some of these fair women would evidently feel relieved by a shriek, but grim etiquette prevents. Passing a roulette table, I heard an English woman, who was holding up both hands full of gold pieces, excitedly exclaim: "See! all that for one napoleon!" Her nervous laugh caused many a frown from those less fortunate.

The green table, or *tapis vert*, is a great leveler. Side by side sit an English "my lady" and a fair fallen one from Vienna or Berlin; here a Russian prince and there a Parisian adventuress; here stands a bright American girl, of twenty or so, in a toilet worth at least $400; she throws down a single gold piece and loses it. She pouts prettily, twisting her glove, and I follow her to another table, where she risks another coin with the same result. Fortunately she did not play high. Here is an Englishman, however, who does; he is the center of all attraction, and a little crowd collects behind him; he is winning heavy stakes! How slowly and monotonously the croupier speaks: "Gentlemen, make your play; the game is made; red wins and black loses," and so on while the game lasts. There is an instant's intermission between each phrase; at the first the players hasten to throw down their gold on red or black, and there are perhaps twenty different gold piles on the table. Here a woman standing and near to the game timidly throws down large Napoleons on black, immediately drawing back and gazing around as if fearful of being seen. There a Spanish millionaire throws down negligently a